



Welcome to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1963 as an overlay of the J. F. Kennedy Space Center. The tremendous variety of habitats found on the refuge and its location on the Atlantic flyway makes Merritt Island an important wintering area for migratory birds.

Concentrations of waterfowl occur in the open waters of Mosquito Lagoon and in the brackish and fresh water impoundments during the fall and winter. Common species include scaup, mottled ducks, blue-winged teal, pintail, and wigeon.

Hunting on Merritt Island

Waterfowl hunting is permitted on 36,000 acres of the refuge's 140,000 acres. The remainder of the refuge is closed to hunting to protect non-game birds and endangered species and to permit other recreational activities to take place. Hunting areas include the open waters of Mosquito Lagoon and most impoundments outside the NASA security areas. The waters of the Banana River are closed to hunting at all times. Also keep in mind that the refuge itself may be closed to hunting at certain unannounced times during Space Shuttle operations. Consult local news sources for the Shuttle security schedule.

Hunt Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to protect wildlife populations and the sportsman. All hunting will be in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Hunters should consult the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission regulations.

- **Parking** - Parking is allowed at all areas on the map marked "Hunter Access Route". Parking is also allowed on open dike roads. Please note that some dike roads open in the past may be closed. All vehicles and boat trailers must be pulled off to the side to allow for passing vehicles. **Parking is not allowed along the Black Point Wildlife Drive or Playalinda Beach Road (including parking lots 1-13 along the beach). Vehicles parked along this route, including in the paved pull-offs, will be towed.**
- **Season** - The open season for ducks and coots is concurrent with seasons established by the State of Florida. No species other than ducks and coots may be taken.
- **Hunt Days** - Hunting is allowed on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day within the designated season from one half hour before sunrise until 1:00 p.m.
- **Permits** - Refuge hunt permits are **required** for all hunters. This permit, attached to this leaflet, will be valid when properly signed and carried on the hunter's person.

- **Quota Hunts:** Beginning in 2000 a Quota Permit is required to hunt Areas 1 and 4 during the months of November and December. The Quota Permit will be assigned through a random drawing. If drawn, there is a \$12.50 fee for each permit. Applications for Quota Permits will be accepted after the State has established the dates for the season and will continue through September 30. To apply, contact the refuge for an application, or visit our website: <http://merrittisland.fws.gov>. Mail completed applications along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Refuge before October 1.

The drawing will be held the first week of October. All applicants will be notified by mail of the results. If your application was drawn, you must provide payment by October 31 (\$12.50 for each permit). Only the person whose name appears on the application may pay for the permit. When sending in payment, please include a second stamped and self-addressed envelope. When payment is received, your permit will be returned. Unpaid/unclaimed permits will go on sale at the Refuge Headquarters beginning November 1. Individuals over 16 may purchase up to three unclaimed permits. Permits may not be sold, but they may be transferred. Lost permits will not be reissued.

The permit can be used only in a specific impoundment on the date(s) stamped on the permit. The permit can be used by a single party, consisting of one to four hunters. The party must remain within 30 yards of the permit holder. Only a set number of permits will be issued for each impoundment, each hunt day. Quota permits are not required if you are hunting in the Indian River outside of the impoundment.

- **Hunter Safety:** Hunter Safety Training is now required in all areas (even Area 3). Hunters must carry their wallet-sized hunter safety card as proof of completing a certified course. Hunter Safety Training is offered by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Contact the state office nearest you to enroll.

Dates to Remember for Quota Permits:

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| • September 1 | Applications Available (after the season is set) |
| • September 30 | Deadline for Applications |
| • October 1 | Quota Drawing (on or about this date) |
| • October 31 | Deadline for Quota Permit payments |
| • November 1 | Leftover Permits go on sale. |

- **Youth Hunters** - In accordance with State regulations, hunters under age 16 may hunt with an adult 21 years of age or older. They must remain in sight and normal voice contact with the adult. Youth hunters under the age of 16 are not required to carry a hunter safety card in any area.

- **Hunt Areas** - Public hunting is permitted in four areas of the refuge. The areas open to hunting are delineated on the map on the reverse side. Waterfowl hunting is allowed only in these four areas. Entry into the Refuge may not begin until 4:00 a.m.

- **Steel Shot** - Only steel or other approved non-toxic shot may be used. Possession of lead or other toxic shot in any gauge is prohibited.

- **Hunting Blinds** - Hunters may bring portable blinds or construct temporary blinds of natural vegetation that will decompose easily. Temporary blinds do not become the builder's property and become available for general use on a first-come basis on subsequent days. Construction of permanent blinds, pit blinds and digging into dikes are prohibited activities.

- **Hunting or Shooting** - Hunting or shooting from or within 10 feet of any dike, roadway, or railroad fill is prohibited.

- **Personal Property** - Decoys, boats and other personal property must be removed by 2:00 p.m. daily.

- **Dogs** - The use of dogs is encouraged to retrieve dead or wounded waterfowl. Dogs must remain under the control of their handlers at all times.

- **Camping** - Camping and overnight parking is prohibited.

- **Boats** - The open waters of the refuge are extremely hazardous under certain wind and water conditions. It's advisable to check a weather advisory prior to your hunt. Coast Guard and Florida Marine Patrol boating regulations are applicable on refuge waters. Air thrust boats, hovercraft and personal watercraft are prohibited.

- **Boat Speed** - Many refuge waters are regulated to protect manatees from collisions with boats. All of Haulover Canal and most of Mosquito Lagoon have year-round speed restrictions in place. Heed all posted speed limits.

- **Hunting Guides** - All guides are required to purchase a Refuge Special Use Permit and have it in possession while guiding.

- **Alcohol** - The possession or use of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

- **Universal Access** - Special accommodations are available for persons with physical disabilities. Contact the Refuge Headquarters for additional information.

- **Violations** - Repeat violations of refuge regulations may result in the loss of hunting privileges.

Waterfowl Management Notes

Proper water level and adequate food availability are two very important aspects of waterfowl habitat. To ensure continuing high-quality habitat on Merritt Island N.W.R., marsh restoration projects were initiated during the summer of 1993. The main objective of these projects is to enhance

the salt marsh ecosystem for many different species in coordination with mosquito control operations. Restoring the marsh areas by reconnecting them to the river will allow for greater species diversity in the impoundments. It will also be a part of the overall management of the Indian River Lagoon System in its entirety. Short-term inconveniences to waterfowl hunters may be realized in some areas. For example, during the 1998-99 season, some Hunt Areas may have conditions different than what has existed over the last several years. Lower water levels in various areas on a rotational basis will allow plants (waterfowl food) to grow in the otherwise nutrient-poor mud flats. This will help reestablish a food chain and provide better food supplies to increase the quality of habitat (and hunting) on a long-term basis. If you have questions about this project, contact the Refuge Headquarters.

For further information, write:

Refuge Manager
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 6504
Titusville, Florida 32782
Phone (407) 861-0667
Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.

or visit our website: <http://merrittisland.fws.gov>.



Merritt Island
National Wildlife Refuge
2000-2001 Hunt Permit
for
Duck and Coot

Name _____
Print

Address _____

I have read and understand Merritt Island N. W. R.'s hunting regulations.

Signature _____
(This permit valid only when signed.)



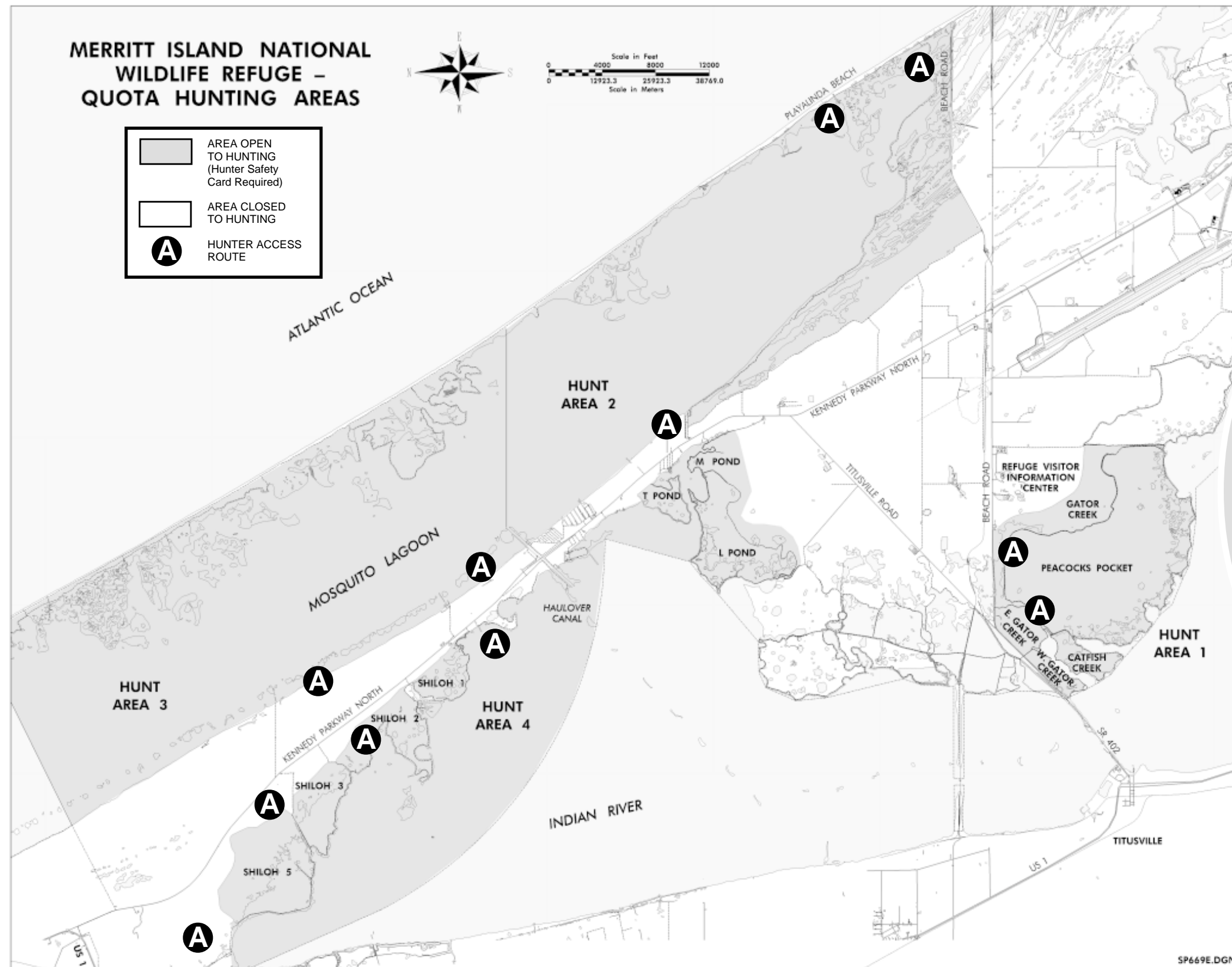
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Hunting Regulations



MERRITT ISLAND

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

